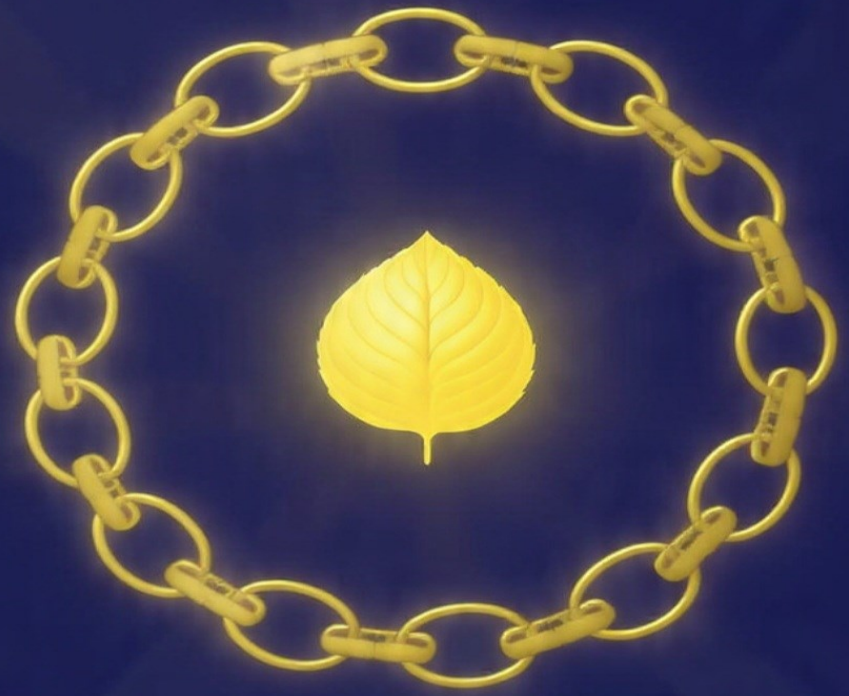
Dammadassi Buddhist Center

PATICCA SAMUPPADA

(Dependent Origination)



VEN DOLOSWALA
UDITHADEERA THERO

Sabbatānaṁ Dhamma dānaṁ Jināti

(The Gift of Dhamma Excels All Gifts)

Providing support or giving something to others is known as **'Sangaha'** (hospitality or sharing). Providing physical necessities such as food, drinks, and clothing is called **'Āmisa-sangaha'** (material sharing). Providing the Dhamma (the Buddha's teachings) to someone's life is called **'Dhamma-sangaha'** (sharing of the Dhamma). The Blessed One (The Buddha) expounded in the *Anguttara Nikaya* that among both material sharing and the sharing of the Dhamma, the sharing of the Dhamma is indeed the supreme.

May these merits be received by our beloved father, **Mr. B. Gnanadasa**! May his afterlife be fortunate, filled with abundance, and may his journey through Samsara be peaceful! May the fiery sufferings of Samsara be extinguished, and may he attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana!

We respectfully transfer these merits to the Most Venerable **Kadangoda Samitha Mahanayaka Thero**, the Most Venerable Chief Prelate (Mahanayaka), holder of the Tripitakacharya and Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degrees, of the Iddamalgoda Vihara Sector of the Amarapura Maha Nikaya. We also offer our respectful merits to the Chief Sanghanayaka of the Kukulu Dekooralaya, the Most Venerable **Ratnapure Seevali Nayaka Thero** (Master of Arts); to our respected teacher and the Registrar of our Nikaya, the Venerable **Delwala Muditha Nayaka Thero**; to the Judicial Chief Prelate (Adhikaranasanga Nayaka),

the Venerable **Willambe Amitha Nayaka Thero** (Bachelor of Arts - Honours); and to the Computer work and book preparation Venerable **Meepagama Sangharatana Thero**. Our grateful transfer of merits is also extended to the Venerable **Kalawane Sanghamajee Thero** and the Venerable **Delwala Saranasiri Thero**, who helped in various ways.

Furthermore, we transfer merits to the Honorable President, Secretary, Treasurer, and all devotees of the **Dhammadassi Buddhist Centre**, as well as to everyone who provides the monthly and Poya day alms (Dana), and all those who contributed to this noble endeavor.

May all these merits conduce to your well-being in this world, to a happy rebirth in the next world, and ultimately lead to the realization of the peaceful and supreme Bliss of Nibbana!

By the Editor:

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Paticcasamuppada (Dependent Origination)

The primary teaching expounded by the Buddhas upon their appearance in the world is the **Law of Cause and Effect (Causality)**. Within the Tripitaka, this Law of Cause and Effect is found manifested in three ways:

1. In a concise manner, it is taught within the **Four Noble Truths** as the cause of suffering.

1. In explaining the cause of suffering, the Buddha also expounded **Paticcasamuppada (Dependent Origination)**, which serves as another method of demonstrating this Law of Cause and Effect.

1. The detailed and analytical exposition of the Law of Cause and Effect is found within the explanation of the twenty-four conditional relations of the **Patthana (The Book of Relations)**.

Today, our discussion focuses on *Paticcasamuppada*. In this world, everything that conditioned has a cause.
However, **Nirvana (Nibbana)** has no cause. Even though everything in the world arises due to a cause, not all of those causes are contained within the framework of Paticcasamuppada.

What appears in various forms such as a being, an individual, a living entity, a human, an animal, a hungry ghost (peta), an asura, or a hell-being, is merely the **Five Aggregates of Clinging (Pancha Upadanakkhandha)**. Because these Five Aggregates arise, persist, and dissolve moment by moment, they

are called **Impermanent (Anicca)**. They are called **Suffering (Dukkha)** because they are constantly oppressed by arising and ceasing, bear the suffering of change (*Viparinama Dukkha*), serve as the basis for the threefold suffering—namely physical/mental pain (*Dukkha-dukkhata*), the suffering of change (*Viparinama-dukkhata*), and the suffering of conditioned states (*Sankhara-dukkhata*)—and because they instill the dread of Samsara. Since they do not endure even for a brief moment according to one's wishes, and are devoid of a being, an individual, or a soul, they are **Non-self (Anatta)**. Therefore, the Five Aggregates of Clinging are suffering, and are thus designated as the **Noble Truth of Suffering (Dukkha Ariya Sacca)**. The Buddha declared that the cause of this suffering is Paticcasamuppada.

Avijjā Paccayā Saṅkhārā

"Dependent on Ignorance, Volitional Formations arise."

What is ignorance (*Avijja*)? In the *Vibhanga Sutta* of the *Abhisamaya Samyutta*, the Buddha declared:

"Dukkhe aññāṇaṃ, dukkhasamudaye aññāṇaṃ, dukkhanirodhe aññāṇaṃ, dukkhanirodhagāmiṇī paṭipadāya aññāṇaṃ"

This means: non-comprehension of suffering, non-comprehension of the cause of suffering, non-comprehension of the cessation of suffering, and non-comprehension of the path leading to the cessation of suffering constitutes ignorance. Accordingly, **ignorance is the lack of realization of the Four Noble Truths**.

The Noble Truth of Suffering is invariably a suffering; it is immutable and cannot be altered, which is why it is a Noble Truth. Similarly, the Truth of the Origin, the Truth of Cessation, and the Truth of the Path are called Truths because they possess the characteristics of absolute reality, immutability, and unalterability.

As stated in the *Loka Sutta* of the *Sacca Samyutta*, these are called **Noble Truths (Ariya Sacca)** because they were realized by the Buddha, who is referred to as the "Noble One" (*Ariya*). Furthermore, as mentioned in the *Sacca Samyutta*, they are called Noble Truths because noble individuals—namely Stream-enterers (*Sotapanna*), Once-returners (*Sakadagami*), Non-returners (*Anagami*), and Arahants—comprehend this Dhamma.

Duties Regarding the Four Noble Truths

The Buddha explained that a distinct duty applies to each of the Four Noble Truths:

- **The Noble Truth of Suffering** must be fully and thoroughly comprehended in terms of impermanence, suffering, non-self, and foulness without any remainder. Therefore, it is termed **"Pariññeyya"** (to be fully understood).

- **The Truth of the Origin (Samudaya)** is something that must be abandoned. Hence, the Buddha declared it as **"Pahātabbaṃ"** (to be abandoned).

- **The Truth of Cessation (Nirodha)** must be realized and made one's own direct experience; thus it was proclaimed as **"Sacchikātabbaṃ"** (to be realized).

- **The Truth of the Path (Magga)** must be developed by means of Virtue (*Sila*), Concentration (*Samadhi*), and Wisdom (*Panna*). Therefore, it was expounded as **"Bhāvitabbaṃ"** (to be developed/cultivated).
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Sankhara (Volitional Formations)

The word *Sankhara* is used in various contexts with different meanings. However, within the framework of *Paticcasamuppada*, *Sankhara* refers specifically to **Kamma (Volitional Action)**. Wholesome actions (Kusala Kamma), unwholesome actions (Akusala Kamma), and indeterminate actions that are neither wholesome nor unwholesome (Avyakata Kamma) are collectively termed *Sankhara*.

In the *Parivimansana Sutta* of the *Abhisamaya Samyutta* in the *Samyutta Nikaya*, the Buddha declared: *"Tayome bhikkhave sankhara"* (Monks, there are three types of formations):

1. **Punnabhisankhara**: Formations of merit (meritorious volitional actions).

1. **Apunnabhisankhara**: Formations of demerit (demeritorious volitional actions).

1. **Anenjabhisankhara**: Formations of the imperturbable (the volition present within the formless jhanas/absorptions).

Furthermore, in the *Vibhanga Sutta* of the *Abhisamaya Samyutta*, three other types of formations were expounded: **Bodily formation (Kaya-sankhara)**, **Verbal formation (Vaci-sankhara)**, and **Mental formation (Citta-sankhara)**. Here, bodily formation refers to bodily volition (*Kaya-sancetana*). This is confirmed by another sutta found within the *Abhisamaya Samyutta*:

"Kaye va Ananda sati kayasancetanahetu uppajjati ajjhattan sukhadukkhan, vacaya va Ananda sati vacisancetanahetu uppajjati ajjhattan sukhadukkhan, mane va Ananda sati manosancetanahetu uppajjati ajjhattan sukhadukkhan."

This translates to: *"Ananda, when the body exists, pleasure and pain arise within oneself due to bodily volition—that is, wholesome and unwholesome thoughts rooted in bodily action. Likewise, when speech exists, pleasure and pain arise within oneself due to verbal volition—that is, wholesome and unwholesome thoughts rooted in speech. When the mind exists, pleasure and pain arise within oneself rooted in mental volition."*

Accordingly:

- **Kaya-sankhara** refers to bodily volitions (*Kaya-sancetana*).

- **Vaci-sankhara** refers to verbal volitions (*Vaci-sancetana*).

- **Citta-sankhara** refers to mental volitions (*Mano-sancetana*).

In short, this explains bodily actions (Kaya-kamma), verbal actions (Vaci-kamma), and mental actions (Mano-kamma). Put simply, this can be clearly understood through the **Ten Wholesome Actions (Dasa Kusala Kamma)** and the **Ten Unwholesome Actions (Dasa Akusala Kamma)**. It is precisely dependent on ignorance that these formations arise.

Vinnana (Consciousness)

Dependent on past wholesome and unwholesome kamma, the **relinking consciousness (Pratisandhi Vinnana)** is established within the mother's womb. Although it states "due to wholesome and unwholesome kamma," it must be understood that the cause is either a wholesome kamma or an unwholesome kamma (not both simultaneously). Consciousness (*Vinnana*) is the mind. It is called *Vinnana* because it cognizes or knows an object.

In the *Abhisamaya Samyutta*, the Buddha declared:

"Cha ime bhikkhave vinnanaka-ya: cakkhuvinnanan, sotavinnanan, ghanavinnanan, jivhavinnanan, kayavinnanan, manovinnanan" (Monks, there are six classes of consciousness).

The six types of consciousness were expounded as follows:

- Cognizing a visual form through the eye is **Eye-consciousness (Cakkhu-vinnana)**.

- Cognizing a sound through the ear is **Ear-consciousness (Sota-vinnana)**.
- Cognizing an odor through the nose is **Nose-consciousness (Ghana-vinnana)**.
- Cognizing a taste through the tongue is **Tongue-consciousness (Jivha-vinnana)**.
- Cognizing a tactile sensation through the body is **Body-consciousness (Kaya-vinnana)**.
- Cognizing a thought or mental object through the mind is **Mind-consciousness (Mano-vinnana)**.

In the *Abhidhamma*, eighty-nine (89) types of consciousness are expounded, which can be further detailed into one hundred and twenty-one (121) types. The cause for the arising of consciousness is past wholesome and unwholesome kamma. Therefore, it is said that "dependent on formations, consciousness arises." Additionally, consciousness also arises dependent on Name and Form (*Nama-rupa*), which will be analyzed later.

Nama-rupa (Name and Form / Mentality and Materiality)

Nama (Name/Mentality) is a collective term for the three aggregates: Feeling (*Vedana*), Perception (*Sanna*), and Volitional Formations (*Sankhara*). These aggregates are called *Nama* because they incline, bend, or lean toward consciousness (*Vinnana*) for their existence.

- **Feeling (*Vedana*)** is the mental factor (*Cetasika*) that experiences the flavor or quality of an object. Feeling is like a person enjoying the taste of food. A pleasant and agreeable quality in an object is **pleasant feeling** (*Sukha Vedana*). An unpleasant and disagreeable quality within an object is **painful feeling** (*Dukkha Vedana*). A quality within an object that is neither painful nor pleasant is **neutral feeling** (*Upekkha Vedana*).

- **Perception (*Sanna*)** means recognition or identification. Recognizing forms is called perception of forms (*Rupa Sanna*); recognizing sounds is perception of sounds (*Sadda Sanna*); recognizing smells is perception of odors (*Gandha Sanna*); recognizing tastes is perception of flavors (*Rasa Sanna*); recognizing touch is perception of tactile objects (*Potthabba Sanna*); and recognizing thoughts or ideas is perception of mental objects (*Dhamma Sanna*).

- **Volitional Formations (*Sankhara*)** is the name given to the fifty mental factors (*Cetasikas*) or thoughts, where volition (*Cetana*) is predominant.

Rupa (Form/Materiality) refers to the **Four Great Elements** (*Cattaro Mahabhuta*)—namely, the Earth element (*Pathavi*), Water element (*Apo*), Fire element (*Tejo*), and Wind element (*Vayo*)—along with the twenty-eight (28) derived material phenomena (*Upadaya Rupa*) born from these Four Great Elements. One should learn and study about them from the texts of the *Abhidhamma*.

Dependent on consciousness, Name and Form arise; and dependent on Name and Form, consciousness arises. In the absence of consciousness, there is no arising of feeling, perception, and volitional formations. These mental phenomena or mental factors (*Cetasikas*) arise together, in union with consciousness; they exist along with consciousness; and when consciousness ceases, they cease as well. Therefore, consciousness is the cause of the mental factors. Furthermore, since no material form can exist without consciousness within the Sense Sphere (*Kama Loka*) and the Fine-Material Sphere (*Rupa Loka*), it is stated that consciousness is also the cause of Form (*Rupa*).

Salayatana (Six Sense Bases)

What is known as *Salayatana*? It consists of the eye-base (*Cakkhayatana*), ear-base (*Sotayatana*), nose-base (*Ghanayatana*), tongue-base (*Jivhayatana*), body-base (*Kayayatana*), and mind-base (*Manayatana*).

They are called *Ayatana* (bases/spheres) because they urge and activate consciousness and mental factors (*Citta-Cetasika*) toward their respective functions. Furthermore, they are called *Salayatana* because they categorize, divide, and describe these states of consciousness and mental factors. They are also termed *Ayatana* because they lead or conduct beings into the immensely long round of rebirth (*Samsara*).

- Because it experiences and enjoys the flavor of visual objects, it is called the **eye**.

- Because it hears, it is called the **ear**.
- Because it smells, it is called the **nose**.
- Because it draws in flavors that sustain life, it is called the **tongue**.
- Because it is a place where unwholesome states (*Papa Dhamma*) arise, it is called the **body**.
- Because it cognizes objects, it is called the **mind**.

The internal sense bases (*Adhyatmika Ayatana*) are likened to an **empty village**. In an empty village, there are no people in the houses, and there is no food or drink in the vessels. Similarly, within these six sense bases—the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind—there is no being, no individual, no soul, and nothing that can be called "I". They are empty of a being, an individual, a soul, or a living entity. Therefore, the six sense bases are like an empty village.

The external sense bases (*Bahira Ayatana*)—namely forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tactile objects, and mental objects—also belong to the category of *Ayatana*. These external bases are like a band of thieves who come to plunder the empty village. Ultimately, the six sense bases are merely a modification of Name and Form (*Nama-rupa*). Because of this, in certain discourses, instead of saying *"Salayatana paccaya phasso"* (Dependent on the six sense bases, contact arises), it is stated as **"Nama-rupa paccaya phasso"** (Dependent on Name and Form, contact arises).

Phassa (Contact)

The mental factor (*Cetasika*) that arises when the eye, a visual form, and eye-consciousness collide or impinge together is known as **Contact (*Phassa*)**. This is not a physical touch.

In the *Vibhanga Sutta* of the *Abhisamaya Samyutta*, the Buddha indicated that there are six classes of contact: *"Cha ime bhikkhave phassakaya"*.

- The meeting of the eye, a visual form, and eye-consciousness is **Eye-contact (*Cakkhu-samphassa*)**.
- The meeting of the ear, a sound, and ear-consciousness is **Ear-contact (*Sota-samphassa*)**.
- The meeting of the nose, an odor, and nose-consciousness is **Nose-contact (*Ghana-samphassa*)**.
- The meeting of the tongue, a flavor, and tongue-consciousness is **Tongue-contact (*Jivha-samphassa*)**.
- The meeting of the body, a tactile object, and body-consciousness is **Body-contact (*Kaya-samphassa*)**.
- The meeting of the mind, a mental object, and mind-consciousness is **Mind-contact (*Mano-samphassa*)**.

Dependent on the six sense bases, contact arises. Furthermore, contact is the cause for the arising of all three aggregates: Feeling (*Vedana*), Perception (*Sanna*), and Volitional Formations (*Sankhara*). Therefore, it is stated in the discourses:

"Phassa samudaya vedana samudayo, phassa samudaya sanna samudayo, phassa samudaya sankhara samudayo"

(With the arising of contact, there is the arising of feeling; with the arising of contact, there is the arising of perception; with the arising of contact, there is the arising of volitional formations.)

Vedana (Feeling)

Feeling is the mental energy or capacity that experiences the flavor or quality of an object. The Buddha explained the term *Vedana* in the sense of experiencing, declaring: *"Vedetiti vedana"* (It feels, therefore it is called feeling). The characteristic of feeling is *Vedaita*, which is the nature of experiencing or undergoing.

The *Vibhanga Sutta* of the *Abhisamaya Samyutta* delineates six types of feeling in this manner:

- **Cakkhusamphassaja vedana**: Feeling born of eye-contact.
- **Sotasamphassaja vedana**: Feeling born of ear-contact.
- **Ghanasamphassaja vedana**: Feeling born of nose-contact.
- **Jivhasamphassaja vedana**: Feeling born of tongue-contact.
- **Kayasamphassaja vedana**: Feeling born of body-contact.

- **Manosamphassaja vedana**: Feeling born of mind-contact.

Tanha (Craving)

The Buddha declared that dependent on feeling, craving arises: *"Vedana paccaya tanha"*. Craving means attachment. It is identified by various names such as desire, attachment, bondage, affection, love, and wishing. Principally, there are six types of craving:

- **Rupa tanha**: Craving for visual forms.
- **Sadda tanha**: Craving for sounds.
- **Gandha tanha**: Craving for odors.
- **Rasa tanha**: Craving for flavors.
- **Potthabba tanha**: Craving for tactile objects.
- **Dhamma tanha**: Craving for thoughts or mental objects.

Craving is the cause of suffering. Therefore, in the exposition of the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha declared craving to be the cause of suffering, known as the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Samudaya Ariya Sacca*). Craving is the foremost among the causes that make a being wander repeatedly through the round of rebirths (*Samsara*).

- Becoming lustful with desire toward the five cords of sensual pleasure—namely forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile objects—is termed **Sensual Craving (*Kama-tanha*)**.

- Taking certain things among objects like forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile objects mentally as permanent, stable, a soul, eternal, unalterable, and everlasting, and the craving bound up with such an eternalist view (*Sassata-ditthi*) is termed **Craving for Existence (*Bhava-tanha*)**.

- The craving that arises when enjoying the flavors of forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tactile objects, and thoughts with the notion that there is no rebirth after death, and therefore one must live happily during this present lifetime, is **Craving for Non-existence (*Vibhava-tanha*)**; it remains bound up with the annihilationist view (*Uccheda-ditthi*).

Upadana (Clinging / Attachment)

It is stated that clinging means firm or tight grasping: *"Upadananti dalhagahanan vuccati"*. According to the sutta passage, *"Yo tattha chandarago tantattha upadanan"*, clinging is the attachment through desire-and-lust (*Chanda-raga*) toward something. There are four types of clinging:

- **Kama-upadana (Clinging to Sensual Pleasures)**: The tight grasping or excessive craving toward the five cords of sensual pleasure—namely forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile objects.

- **Silabbata-upadana (Clinging to Rules and Vows)**: The tight grasping or firm adherence to various observances, practices, goat-vows, dog-vows, and multiple precepts taught in other teachings outside of this Dispensation.

- **Ditthi-upadana (Clinging to Views)**: The tight grasping of wrong or false views. This includes the sixty-two (62) types of wrong views.

- **Attavada-upadana (Clinging to the Doctrine of a Soul)**: The tight grasping of the notion that a soul exists. This includes the twenty (20) types of identity-view (*Sakkaya-ditthi*).

Upadana Paccaya Bhavo

"Dependent on Clinging, Existence/Becoming arises."

Bhava (Existence/Becoming) is a name used to refer to Kamma. Likewise, the word *Bhava* is also used to describe the appearance or arising of the aggregates, which is birth. Wholesome and unwholesome kammas are termed **Kamma-bhava (Kamma-existence)**, while the appearance of the aggregates that arise due to those kammas is termed **Uppatti-bhava (Rebirth-existence)**.

In the *Vibhanga Sutta* of the *Abhisamaya Samyutta*, the Buddha declared that there are three types of existence: *"Tayome bhikkhave bhava: kamabhavo, rupabhavo, arupabhavo"*.

- Wholesome and unwholesome kammas that mature within the Sense Sphere (*Kama Loka*) are termed **Sensual Existence (*Kama-bhava*)**.

- Wholesome fine-material kammas that cause rebirth and mature within the Fine-Material Brahma Sphere (*Rupavacara Brahma Loka*) are termed **Fine-Material Existence (*Rupa-bhava*)**.

- Imperturbable formless jhana volitions that cause rebirth and mature within the Formless Brahma Sphere (*Arupavacara Brahma Loka*) are termed **Formless Existence (*Arupa-bhava*)**.

These three modes of existence are designated as *Kamma-bhava* because they form the basis for rebirth. Within the framework of *Paticcasamuppada*, what is referred to as *Bhava* is specifically *Kamma-bhava*.

Bhava Paccaya Jati

"Dependent on Existence, Birth arises."

Jati means arising, coming into being, or birth. The Dhamma mentions four ways in which beings take birth (**The Four Modes of Generation / Chaturo Yoni**):

- **Andaja Yoni**: Egg-born generation (birth inside an egg).

- **Jalabuja Yoni**: Womb-born generation (birth inside a mother's womb).

- **Samsedaja Yoni**: Moisture-born generation (birth in a damp or humid environment).

- **Opapatika Yoni**: Spontaneous generation (arising instantaneously with a fully formed body according to one's kamma). Beings in hell, hungry ghosts (*petas*), devas, and Brahmas take birth spontaneously. It is mentioned in the discourses that humans and animals too, on very rare occasions, can be born spontaneously.

Birth ultimately means entering a womb, the manifestation of the six sense bases, and the arising of the Five Aggregates of Clinging.

Jara, Marana (Aging and Death)

Aging and death are the fruits born dependent on birth.

- **Aging (*Jara*)** is the decaying, wearing out, or growing old of a being who has been born.

- **Death (*Marana*)** is the breaking up, cutting off, or cessation of the five aggregates belonging to this particular lifetime.

Paticcasamuppada Vibhanga: The Simile of the Blind Man

In order to understand the deep doctrinal aspects contained within the system of *Paticcasamuppada* in a simple and logical manner, the analysis of the simile regarding **"The Danger to the**

Blind Man", as presented by ancient teachers, is recorded as follows:

1. Avijja / Ignorance (Imagery/Simile: A blind man who cannot see)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** When ignorance exists, the true reality of the world—namely the Three Characteristics of Existence: Impermanence (*Anicca*), Suffering (*Dukkha*), and Non-self (*Anatta*)—is not comprehended, and wholesome and unwholesome qualities cannot be correctly identified. Therefore, ignorance is likened to a blind man holding a walking stick, who cannot see.

2. Sankhara / Volitional Formations (Simile: The blind man tripping)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** The operation of wholesome, unwholesome, and imperturbable volitional formations (*Anenjabhisankhara*)—which arise precisely dependent on ignorance and cause the suffering of Samsara—is like the blind man, unable to see the path, tripping unexpectedly while walking forward.

3. Vinnana / Consciousness (Simile: The tripped blind man falling to the ground)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** The arising of consciousness—specifically the relinking consciousness (*Pratisandhi Vinnana*)—dependent on volitional formations, plunges the being into a new birth and a long saṃsāric journey.

This is exactly like the blind man who tripped falling uncontrollably onto the ground.

4. Nama-rupa / Name and Form (Simile: The fallen blind man groaning in grief)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Because Name and Form (the mental body and physical body) arise dependent on consciousness, the being falls prey to saṃsāric suffering. This is like the fallen blind man lying on the ground and groaning in intense pain and great grief.

5. Salayatana / Six Sense Bases (Simile: Six blisters forming where he fell)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** The arising of the six sense bases (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind) dependent on Name and Form is comparable to six blisters (boils) emerging on the blind man's body due to injuries sustained where he fell.

6. Phassa / Contact (Simile: Those six blisters colliding against a wall or stone)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Contact, which occurs dependent on the six sense bases, is like the six blisters formed on the blind man's body inadvertently colliding or forcefully striking against a stone or a wall when he attempts to walk again.

7. Vedana / Feeling (Simile: Intense suffering born of the collision)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** The arising of feeling dependent on contact is identical to the unbearable, immense physical pain that arises for the blind man because those blisters struck against the stone.

8. Tanha / Craving (Simile: The desire to obtain treatment)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Craving arising dependent on feeling is like the intense wish and desire that develops within the blind man to cure or apply medicine to his wounds because of the acute pain caused by the blisters colliding.

9. Upadana / Clinging (Simile: Obtaining unwholesome or unsuitable treatment)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Clinging (firm grasping) arising dependent on craving is like the blind man, deluded by pain, being driven by a short-sighted desire for a cure to buy unsuitable treatments or incorrect types of medicine.

10. Bhava / Existence (Simile: Applying the unsuitable medicine on the wound)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Existence (the conditioning of *Kamma-bhava* and *Uppatti-bhava*) occurring

dependent on clinging is like forcefully applying the toxic, completely unsuitable medicine he found directly onto the wound.

11. Jati / Birth (Simile: The wound festering and becoming severely deformed)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Birth occurring dependent on existence is like the wound rotting, festering, and turning into a highly dangerous, severely deformed state due to the application of that unsuitable, toxic medicine.

12. Jara-marana / Aging and Death (Simile: The wound swelling, blisters bursting, and leading to immense agony)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair occurring dependent on birth are equivalent to the immense catastrophe and mortal agony the blind man must suffer for the rest of his life as the poisoned, festering wound swells severely, secretes pus, and the blisters burst one by one.

Paticcasamuppada Vibhanga: The Wondrous Array of Dhamma Similes

In order to understand how the operation of the Wheel of Existence (*Bhava-cakra*) in the teaching of *Paticcasamuppada* deludes beings, the noble array of similes presented in ancient Dhamma texts should be known in sequence as follows:

Avijja / Ignorance (Simile: A cataract or film over the eye)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Because it subjects beings to immense suffering through both the failure to strive to know suffering (not seeing reality as it truly is) and through wrongful practice, ignorance is like a "cataract" or film that forms over the eye, obstructing the vision.

Sankhara / Volitional Formations (Simile: The pupa or silkworm)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Enveloped by ignorance, the foolish (deluded) being accumulates volitional formations that bring about renewed existence. This is like a "silkworm" (pupa) that entangles itself in the threads it produces, becoming trapped and oppressed inside the cocoon (house) it built by itself. Driven by ignorance, the being is entangled in the cocoon of formations and imprisoned in Samsara.

Vinnana / Consciousness (Simile: The king and the grand minister established in the kingdom)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Arising with the assistance of volitional formations, consciousness—specifically the relinking consciousness (*Pratisandhi Vinnana*)—establishes the being within the five realms of destiny (hell, animal, hungry ghost, human, or deva). This is like a "king" who ascends the throne in a grand royal palace,

receiving the assistance and protection of a highly powerful minister.

Nama-rupa / Name and Form (Simile: Images created by an illusionist)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** When the relinking consciousness exists, diverse phenomena of Name and Form—such as deva or human forms—arise, based on the kamma-born objects that cause birth. Consciousness produces these states of Name and Form just like an "illusionist" (magician) on a stage who creates and displays various illusory images as if they exist, even though they do not.

Salayatana / Six Sense Bases (Simile: A thick jungle situated on highly fertile ground)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Rooted in Name and Form and relying on them, the six sense bases (eye, ear, etc.) grow and reach maturity. This is like a "thick jungle" that rapidly grows and flourishes upon an exceptionally fertile earth (soil) that provides rich nourishment.

Phassa / Contact (Simile: Fire produced by rubbing friction-sticks together)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Contact arises from the collision of the internal and external sense bases. This is like friction-sticks (fire-drills) or matches being rubbed vigorously against one another, where a spark or a great fire breaks out instantly due to that friction.

Vedana / Feeling (Simile: The burning sensation of a person caught in a fire)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** The moment contact manifests, feeling arises. This is like a person caught in a fire that broke out from the friction-stick, experiencing a "great burning sensation and agony" all over the body from being severely burned.

Tanha / Craving (Simile: The thirst of someone drinking salt water)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Craving arises in the being who experiences feeling. This is like a "man drinking salt water (sea water)" when he has a severe thirst; the more he drinks salt water, instead of his thirst being quenched, it grows even more acute. One who has craving longs for the pleasures of existence just like a severely thirsty person running in search of water.

Upadana / Clinging (Simile: A fish swallowing bait out of greed for material gain)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Clinging is the firm grasping of objects through the modes of craving and views. Due to clinging, the being grasps existence anew. This is like a "fish" that, out of intense greed for food (allure of bait), instantly and firmly swallows the bait hooked on a fishing line, entirely unaware of the fatal danger within it.

Bhava / Existence (Simile: The seed that gives rise to a sprout)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Due to clinging, the force of kamma matures and existence is conditioned. When existence is present, birth (*Jati*) follows next. This is like having a fertile "seed" (nut) that hides within itself all the necessary energy to become a magnificent tree in the future. If the seed exists, the appearance of the sprout (sapling) cannot be prevented.

Jati / Birth (Simile: The sprout or sapling emerging from the seed)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Due to the kammic energy known as existence, the birth (new arising) of the being takes place. This is like a "tender sprout" (sapling) newly emerging by bursting through the earth from that fertile seed.

Jara-marana / Aging and Death (Simile: The growth and decay of the grown tree)

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** For one who is born, aging, death, sorrow, and lamentation are inherited. This is like the sprout that emerged from the ground gradually becoming a great tree, growing, spreading its branches, and ultimately decaying and crashing down.

Conclusion

In this manner, through these similes, the perilous nature of this great Wheel of Existence (*Paticcasamuppada*) as well as its systematic connections must be thoroughly understood both doctrinally and logically.

Dedicated for the Sharing of the Dhamma

(Dhamma Dāna Piṇisa)

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